

Massachusetts Statewide Community Transportation Coordination Conference May 5, 2015

MassRIDES and Community Transportation: Employers, Carpools, and Regional Coordinating Councils

Presenter: Adam Blye, MassRIDES Worksite Outreach Coordinator for Western Mass.

MassRIDES is the statewide travel options program. They work with employers and commuters within the Commonwealth to promote the use of commute options in order to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality and mobility. For employers they offer outreach and worksite services such as marketing, posters, tax info, other tools & resources. These may include onsite events, preferential parking, bike racks, showers, lockers, transit pass management, monthly promotions, transit and vanpool subsidies, formal telework, pre-tax benefits, and shuttle and car share services. MassRIDES will help develop tailored options for employers. For example they can create zip code maps that show where employees are traveling from. That encourages employees to reach out to coworkers who are also their neighbors.

Other MassRIDES services include:

- Emergency Ride Home Program (for employees only)
- Ride-matching (NuRide) and rewards program
- Vanpool subsidy program
- Special promotions, including:
 - Massachusetts ECO Awards: Recognizing employers that have innovative approaches and have achieved changes in employment, leading to a reduction of carbon emissions and traffic congestion
 - BayState Bike Week: Promotion of sustainable transportation options
 - Clean Air Challenge (formerly Car Free Week): Challenges people around the state to shift modes and try to green their commute. Provides alternative travel information to commuters.

Adam then provided a live NuRide Demo, which is accessible at: <http://www.nuride.com/MassRIDES>

- How to create a profile
 - Creating a profile is easy, requiring only basic personal information
 - Setting preferences: functionality allows users to set preferences such as whether to ride with a smoker, non-smoker, whether only to ride with co-workers or not, gender preference, etc.
- Looking for carpool partners:
 - NuRide will locate commuters in an area near your point of origin, who are making a similar trip during the same time period as the user is requesting.
 - NuRide users can browse the different users' information and determine who may be a good match.
- How to contact a potential ride partner:
 - Users should first correspond with potential commuting partners via the email function on the site a few times before agreeing to meet in person.

- It is also recommended that users meet their potential travel partner before riding with them.
- Block, buddy and flag options:
 - NuRide allows users to label other commuters as **buddies** as preferential matches, to block a commuter from appearing in future commute searches, or to flag a commuter, if they think that user is somehow untrustworthy. When a user is flagged, an investigation is initiated.
- Log a trip:
 - Trips can be set up to logged automatically (for repeating trips), or manually. They track carbon emission savings over time, and award points for each commute logged.
- Points and Rewards:
 - Users can use the points they earn to redeem for rewards. Rewards change constantly and include a number of local businesses (determined by your home address), and national online retailers. Popular rewards include baseball tickets, restaurant discounts or gift cards, etc.
- Walking and Biking:
 - Benefits of having a buddy: Some people will use NuRide to find a walking or biking buddy. This encourages people to use active transportation modes especially by improving safety.

MassRIDES' Van Pool Subsidy Program is open to MassRIDES members whose trips at least start or end in Massachusetts. The state covers 50% of cost of van and the cost of gas is split among van pool members. Van Pool members are given the Emergency Ride Home guarantee in case of sickness, or when the vanpool is not available for whatever reason. Regular vans can be swapped for wheelchair accessible vans if a vanpool member requires it. Changes in vans are accommodated quickly by the companies who manage the subsidized van pools (VRide and Enterprise). While a vanpool is often made up of employees working at the same company, whenever there are seats available, members of the general public can join a vanpool. Vanpool members make the determination of whether they can alter the route of the vanpool to accommodate a new user.

Audience questions:

- ***How much personal information is shared in the member's profile?*** Only a user name and an approximate home and work location are given. User's personal address is not shared.
- ***Users may be vulnerable to safety issues while riding in someone else's car. How does MassRIDES deal with this?*** The carpooling and vanpooling matching services rely on a volunteer, peer-to-peer relationship, and users need to understand that they need to act reasonably and take appropriate precautions. Users are strongly encouraged to meet their potential ride mate before riding together, and to flag anyone who warrants it.